



AFFIRMATION:

UNITED METHODISTS FOR LESBIAN AND GAY CONCERNS

Post Office Box 1021 Evanston, Illinois 60204

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DREW UNIVERSITY

February 19, 1985

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Dear Friends,

BY:

If, like us, you watch your mailbox for each issue of AFFIRMATION's newsletter, you have reason to wonder where it's been since last summer. There have been some distribution problems that made us unable to keep to our planned schedule. These are now well on their way to resolution, and you should be receiving a newsletter by the middle of next month.

But we are so excited about upcoming plans and current activities, that we couldn't wait until then for you to get the word.

Chief among the causes for our enthusiasm is our spring national meeting, which will be held April 12-14 near Tampa, Florida. It is a special opportunity for southeastern members of our network to connect more directly with the national movement. It is also a chance for those from northern climes to thaw out in the warmth of the Florida sun and of the love of old and new friends. Our theme is "Moving Beyond Isolation." The meeting will include a special focus on how we develop support networks for our lives and our work for justice when the context for both is a hostile social and insitutional environment. There will also be time for worship, socializing and relaxing together in a warm and comfortable setting.

Since the lowest airline fares these days require 30 days advance purchase, there is no time to waste in making plans if you are traveling by air. (See the enclosed information and registration form for more detail.)

As you make summer vacation plans you will also want to keep in mind our AFFIRMATION family reunion. This event will be held July 3-7 at Tempel Hills United Methodist Camp, in the shadow of Pikes Peak, near Colorado Springs, Colorado. In addition to the attractions of good fellowship, outdoor recreation, singing and worship in a beautiful location, the Family Reunion also offers an optional workshop on developing a lesbian and gay liberation theology. A special brochure giving the details of this event will be enclosed with the upcoming newsletter.

Here's a progress report on some of our other work:

Our effort to identify, support and network among local churches who welcome lesbian and gay participation in their ministries--the Reconciling Congregation Program--is moving full speed ahead. There are now ten such congregations, with another two dozen in various stages of the process. A new publication, MANNA FOR THE JOURNEY, will be a resource to these congregations and for others working for gay and lesbian concerns in the church. The first issue is scheduled for this spring. Members and staff and the General Board of Discipleship have been invited to a reception and briefing about the Reconciling Congregation program in connection with their Nashville meeting later this month.

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At AFFIRMATION's urging, several United Methodist leaders wrote the United States Civil Rights Commission to ask that lesbians and gay men be included in a study of violence against minorities which that Commission was planning. When you have the opportunity, express your thanks to these people for their support: Bishop Elias Galvan (Phoenix Area); Haviland Houston, head of the General Board of Church and Society; Martha Kline, coordinator of anti-homophobia activities for the Methodist Federation for Social Action; Bishop Jack Tuell (Los Angeles Area); and Bishop Woodie White (Illinois Area). We will update this list as we learn of others who responded to our request.

Major regional organizing activities are planned for the southeastern region this spring. Two members of the coordinating committee will travel through the region in March, and AFFIRMATION will provide the primary resource persons for an ecumenical conference "Homophobia and the Community of Faith: Moving Beyond Isolation," to be held in Orlando, Florida just after Easter.

These are just examples of the types of activities which invite your participation through AFFIRMATION. We are looking forward to a great year, including a celebration of our tenth anniversary at our Fall meeting in Chicago, September 20-22. We need each other on this journey, and we look forward to the involvement of each person.

Thanks for your patience about the news letter; thanks for your gifts and your work and your prayers.

The Coordinating Committee

P. S. If you want a few days' extra vacation in Florida before or after the spring meeting, arrangements can be made to stay at the retreat center. Call DJ (see registration information) for details.

P.P.S. A member of the AFFIRMATION network who is a travel agent is available to help you find the lowest possible air fares and to issue tickets for your travel to Florida, Colorado, or anywhere. Contact Richard Cash, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Chicago, IL [REDACTED]. Phone: [REDACTED].

MOVING BEYOND ISOLATION

April 12-14, 1985

an exploration and experience of justice-seeking community

for the people of AFFIRMATION: United Methodists for Lesbian and Gay Concerns

Location The meeting will be held in a comfortable and secure retreat center with a swimming pool, located near Tampa, Florida. To ensure our privacy, the exact site will not be disclosed in printed public materials, and participation will be on the basis of advance registration only.

Travel Air, rail or bus travel should be scheduled to Tampa, Florida, with arrival indicated on the registration form. Transportation will leave the Tampa airport at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Friday, April 12, and will make stops as necessary at bus and Amtrak terminals. (Pick up information will be sent to registrants by return mail.) The meeting will end after lunch on Sunday; return travel should not be scheduled earlier than 3 p.m. on Sunday. We will attempt to accomodate the needs of persons who cannot adhere to this schedule, but there are limits to what we can manage.

Persons who will be traveling by private auto will be sent travel instructions when their registration is received.

Cost The registration fee includes lodging, meals and, if necessary, transportation from and return to Tampa. The fee is \$3 per \$1,000 of annual income, with a minimum fee of \$20. (If you don't bring your own bed linens, they can be rented from the center for an additional \$2.00.)

Participants are also expected to participate in a travel pool. Those whose travel cost is less than the average cost of all participants will pay into the pool the amount of the difference. Those whose travel cost is greater than the average will, if they need it, receive a refund of the difference between their cost and the average. Cost of travel by car will be figured at 20¢ per mile or the lowest available air fare, whichever is less. Average travel costs are estimated at \$175 for this meeting.

It is our goal that registration and travel pool costs not become a barrier to anyone's participation. Those with special needs in this area should so indicate on the back of the registration form.

Expectations Confidentiality is a requirement of the meeting, in order to respect the privacy needs of many of those attending. Our experience is that attending an AFFIRMATION meeting is a safe experience. While not all AFFIRMATION members are lesbian or gay, all meeting participants proudly claim that identity.

Questions about the meeting can be addressed to D.J. Porter between 7 and 10 p.m. Eastern time at [REDACTED].

Please register by April 1 by sending the form to AFFIRMATION, [REDACTED],
New Hope, Pennsylvania [REDACTED]

Name _____ Home phone () _____

Address _____

Arrival plans: Airline/flight, bus or rail, and time _____

_____ Check here if you want linens provided for \$2 additional.

Registration fee of \$ _____ is enclosed. Write questions or messages on reverse.

